

CDC Lead Poisoning Fact Sheet

What Every Parent Should Know About Lead Poisoning in Children

- ▶ For children at risk for lead exposure, a simple blood test can prevent a lifetime spoiled by the irreversible damage caused by lead poisoning.
- ▶ One of the most important risk factors for lead exposure is the age of housing. Over 80 percent of all homes built before 1978 in the U.S. have lead-based paint in them. The older the house, the more likely it is to contain lead-based paint and a higher concentration of lead in the paint.
- ▶ According to recent CDC estimates, 890,000 U.S. children age 1-5 have elevated blood lead levels, and more than one-fifth of African-American children living in housing built before 1946 have elevated blood lead levels. These figures reflect the major sources of lead exposure: deteriorated paint in older housing, and dust and soil that are contaminated with lead from old paint and from past emissions of leaded gasoline.
- ▶ Lead poisoning can cause learning disabilities, behavioral problems, and at very high levels, seizures, coma and even death.
- ▶ Children between 12 and 36 months of age have a lot of hand to mouth activity, so if there is lead in their homes, they are more likely to take it in than are older children.

For more information, talk to your pediatrician or call the [National Lead Information Clearinghouse](http://www.leadclearinghouse.org) toll-free at 1-800-424-LEAD (1-800-424-5323).

Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/faq/cdc97a.htm>